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Lessons Learned, [HEADQUARTERS],
6TH BATTALION 14TH ARTILLERY [11] (8)

88 (18) OAC-FSR | (19) OT-RD-660005 | 11 17 May 66

SUBJECT: Operational Report on Lessons Learned for Period 1 January - 30 April 1966 (RCS CS GPO-28 (R1)) (U)

TO: See Distribution
⑨ Operational rept. 1 Jan-30 Apr 66.
SECTION 1. SIGNIFICANT HEADQUARTERS OR UNIT ACTIVITIES (C)

1. (U) Batteries of this battalion occupied positions on Highway 19 between Man Yang Pass and Pleiku for road opening support seven (7) times for a total of 29 days. On these operations no contact was made and there was no firing except for registrations.

2. (U) Batteries occupied positions of Highway 14, south of Pleiku, for ARVN road-opening operations two (2) times for a total of four (4) days. No contact was made and only registrations were conducted.

3. (U) Battaries participated on Operation "MATADOR" with the 1st Air Cav Div between 4 and 22 January, occupying firing positions along Highway 19 between Pleiku and Duc Co Special Forces Camp, at Plei Mrong SF Camp, and at Plei Do Iam SF Camp. Firing conducted included registrations, H&I fires, one (1) preparation, and adjustment of several defensive concentrations.

4. (U) At 010001H February 1966, the Battalion was released from attachment to 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) per Section I, paragraph I, General Orders Number 41, HQ, FFW, dated 17 January 1966. At 010001H February 1966, Battery A, 3rd Battalion 18th Artillery, was attached to the 6th Battalion 14th Artillery per Section II, paragraph I of the same General Order. Battery C, 6th Battalion 14th Artillery was detached from this battalion and attached to 3rd Battalion 18th Artillery per Section II, paragraph I of the same General Order.

5. (U) One battery of the battalion participated in Operation "Taylor" with the 3rd Bde, 25th Division during the period 5 - 8 February. Only registrations and H&I type missions were conducted.

6. (U) On 19 February 1966 Lt Col Charles C Williams assumed command of the battalion.

7. (U) On 1 March, 2nd Lt. John A Horalek was wounded while serving as Air Observer in the vicinity of 49PAB70560. He was evacuated to CONUS.

8. (U) Two (2) firing batteries, one (1) 8" and one (1) 175mm, plus necessary command elements participated in Operation "LINCOLN" with the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) from 25 March to 9 April. During this operation

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the Battalion(-) was attached to the Division during the period 4 - 9 April. Battalion(-) occupied six positions and traveled approximately 256 KM. During the period 3 - 7 April the firing batteries of battalion(-) moved on a cross-country route from Plei Me SF Camp to position vic 48PYV994986. Initially only track vehicles, battery commanders' M151's, and ammunition trailers (towed by guns/howitzers) participated. A second convoy consisting of eight (8) ammunition trucks was dispatched along the same trail the following day. The terrain traversed was extremely rugged. It consisted of steep banks, gullies and hills, streams or stream beds, large boulders, trees or tree stumps. The maximum speed was approximately three (3) MPH. The VTR (MB8) was used extensively to pull other vehicles over obstacles and to clear terrain with the front blade. It required approximately 26 hours of strenuous effort to move the elements approximately 25 Kilometers. Damages to equipment as a result of the movement over this terrain included:

- (a) Four (4) torsion bars for 5T ammunition trucks.
- (b) One (1) M107 rear trailing idler arm assembly destroyed.
- (c) One (1) M110 rear trailing idler arm assembly destroyed, two (2) road wheels damaged.
- (d) One (1) M110 auxiliary drive became unserviceable.
- (e) M-88 (VTR) became unserviceable due to engine and transmission failures.
- (f) Ammunition trailers were damaged to the extent that welding and body work was required.
- (g) Road wheels and track blocks became unserviceable at a faster than normal rate, necessitating replacement of 28 track blocks and 25 road wheels prior to return to home station.

Only H&I missions and registrations were fired on this operation.

9. (U) All batteries of the battalion participated on Operation "MOSBY II" during the period 21 April to the end of the period. In phase 1 the 8" battery displaced while both 175mm batteries supported from base camp. During phase 2, Battery B 175mm displaced to a position vic Kontum and Battery D (8") occupied a position along Highway 19 east of Pleiku. The batteries fired landing-zone preparations and H&I fires.

10. (C) This battalion has worked with, and successfully supported on operations, the 1st Cavalry Division (AM), 3rd Bde 25th Division, and II ARVN Corps units. In the case of II ARVN Corps, usually no artillery is involved in the operation except this battalion, which in effect places the battalion in Direct Support, a mission for which it is neither organized nor capable of efficiently performing.

b. Another problem involved when working with other units is supply. This battalion does not have the capability to defend the base camp, provide (2) firing batteries plus necessary command and support elements in the field, and also to conduct road marches for purposes of daily resupply between the base camp, or the PSE, and the field location of battalion(-). This is one consideration that commanders of units with whom we work do not appear to take into consideration.

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11. (U) Morale and efficiency of troops in the battalion have improved during this period. At the close of the period both morale and efficiency are higher than at any time since this unit departed CONUS.

12. (U) There have been no significant enemy contacts or activity in the area during this period.

13. (U) All operations have been conducted on hard surface, dry roads with the exception of the movement described in paragraph 8 above.

14. (U) During the period, the present for duty strength of the battalion varied from 75% to 90% of TO&E. The average number of personnel carried In Transit was 50, and varied between 38 and 79.

15. (U) The battalion provided three NCO's to Duc Co SF Camp and one (1) Commissioned Officer and three (3) NCO's to DMK PEK SF Camp for approximately three weeks. Personnel taught FDC and 105mm Cannoneers' duties to CIDG personnel at these camps. Personnel are still on TDY at the close of the period.

16. (U) During the period 18 November 1965 to 30 April 1966 this unit expended the following ammunition in our mission GSR 1st Cavalry Division (AM) 3rd Bde 25th Division, and II ARVN Corps Arty:

WEAPON	TYPE	FUZE	AMOUNT
8"	HE	PD	1834
	CVT	CVT	83
		MTSQ	40
		TOTAL	1957
175mm	HE	PD	3180
		CVT	66
		TOTAL	3276

Section 2. COMMANDER'S RECOMMENDATIONS (U)

A. Lessons Learned

1. (U) Computation of Firing Data.

Item: Fastest possible means of computing firing data.

DISCUSSION: The average MET plus VE range corrections for the 175mm gun is -1200; for the 8" howitzer it is -600M. These average corrections can vary as much as +500M depending on current weather conditions. Because of the amount of computations involved, there may be errors made by one of the computers which will require additional time to check out to insure accurate firing data.

Observation: The Gun Direction Computer, M18 which is authorized for this time lapse and allow more accurate firing data to be computed in seconds rather than minutes. Pending issue of the Computer maximum emphasis is stressed on

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solution of NATO Metro messages and proper application of the corrections thus derived.

2. (C) Ammunition Transportation.

Item: Difficulties in Ammunition Supply for Heavy Artillery Units.

Discussion: When moving cross-country in terrain suitable for only tracked vehicles, the battalion can transport only three (3) rounds per weapon and must rely upon aerial resupply as the 5T truck is the organic ammunition transporter.

Observation:

a. An alternate means of ground ammunition transportation would be use of the XM548 Full Tracked Cargo Carrier. This will enable ammunition to be taken where ever the guns go regardless of weather or terrain.

b. Aerial resupply is feasible and was practiced on Operation "Lincoln". However, with a weight of approximately 260 pounds per complete round, the carrying capacity of cargo aircraft is very limited. A complete load for a CH-47 is 24 complete rounds; for a CH-54 approximately 64 complete rounds; and for a CV-2 approximately 28 complete rounds.

3. (C) Cross-country Mobility.

Item: Breakdown rate of M107 and M110.

Discussion: On cross-country moves over other than established roads, the M107 and M110 have an excessively large number of mechanical failures. See Section 1, para 8 above.

Observation: Thorough prior ground reconnaissance is necessary to insure that the best possible route is selected. Also, movements of this nature should be executed only for a specific worthwhile purpose.

4. (C) Resupply.

Item: Resupply difficulty of a separate battalion when operation away from base camp.

Discussion: A separate battalion, with units in the field and with sole responsibility for defense of a base camp, does not have either the manpower or equipment to conduct convoy operations to resupply the batteries in the field.

Observation: When a separate battalion is committed to furnish one or more firing batteries in support of an operation, the battery or batteries involved should be attached to the larger organization for logistical support.

5. (U) Generators.

Item: Large Deadline Rate on TO&E Generators.

Discussion: The 1.5KW 110V AC generators have become non-operational at a higher rate than is normally expected. The repair or replacement takes as long as 60 days. These generators are used as a power source in both camp and field positions, resulting in excessively long periods of utilization. Paperwork had been initiated to get large generators installed for a base camp power system.

Observation: Maximum emphasis is being placed on thorough preventative maintenance. However, generators are still becoming non-operational faster than support echelons can repair or replace.

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B. RECOMMENDATIONS (U)

1. (U) Logistics.

a. The M18 Gun Direction Computer, with all associated equipment, as listed in TO&E 6-435D, Line Item Numbers 410742 and 235595 should be issued to this battalion as soon as possible. The computers issued should be programmed for 8" howitzer and 175mm gun. The computers have been requisitioned through normal supply channels on 18 May 1966.

b. Emphasis should be placed on production and early issue of the M548 Full Tracked Cargo Carrier to units in RVN. This battalion is currently using the 5t, M54A2.

c. Maximum emphasis should be placed on installation of a permanent power source in the vicinity of this battalion's base camp. If this is not feasible generators in excess of TO&E authorization should be issued to provide power to the base camp area.

2. (U) Operations: When units of this battalion are employed with a larger force, such as the 1st Cav Div (AM) or 3rd Bde 25th Div, the units should be attached to the larger organization and responsibility for operational control and logistical support placed on the gaining unit. Administration should be retained by the parent organization.

/s/Charles C. Williams
/t/CHARLES C. WILLIAMS
Lt Col, Arty
Commanding

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